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DECORATIVE COMPOSITION.

Translated from the French of HENRI MAYEUX, Architect to the French Government. and Professor of Decorative Art in the Municipal Schools of Paris.

CHAPTER III.—(CONTINUED.)

THE repetition of oblique lines, parallel to one another, produces a warped, slanting impression, well exemplified in the three vases, Fig. 90. We might also cite a certain class of so-called Oriental edifices, such as the spiral, gadrooned, bulb-like domes of Russian churches and twisted Roumanian steeples. But oblique or slanting lines have so obviously a feeble appearance, that forms like the serpentine, spiral, etc., should be used sparingly, as apt to create weariness and a feeling of unrest if persisted in. Oblique lines, however, when covering a surface of any length, should not be left to themselves; vertical and horizontal forms, or details in which these elements form the chief feature, should be introduced as a frame-work, thus investing the composition with strength and solidity. The finials met with throughout Hellenic, Roman and Italian Renaissance architecture show that their designers paid attention to this principle; the Arabs were equally careful to introduce inverted angular forms in the roof of their edifices, whilst the absence of similar details on the gabled buildings of the Middle Ages produces an appearance of incompleteness, Fig. 91. The knobs found at one or both ends of the banisters are due to the same principle.

A curious effect may be observed in geometric figures composed of a number of parallel lines by simple change of position one to another, producing combinations of so different a character as to seem scarcely possible that they have been formed out of the same material, Fig. 92. The Arabs, at little cost of mental effort, it must be admitted, are very ingenious in evolving most complex and elaborate ornament out of simple geometric forms; but these sink into a subordinate place as we rise higher and make flowers and animals the chief feature of the ornament.

When the form is divided into squares, particular attention should be exercised in drawing the outline with great precision and accuracy; its natural form should be so apparent as to need no testing with the compass. Prominent features in the inner ornament should be discarded as interfering with the general effect; hence art subjects, A, B, C, Fig. 93, will be appropriate in equilateral rectangles, and F, G, H will work well in squares. The angles of square forms or panels are generally furnished with ancones, knobs and the like, to set off their natural outline; but if the repetition only occurred at two of the angles their character would be destroyed, Fig. 94; albeit, they would harmonize with the irregular contour of rectangular forms.[*]

This principle does not impede the freedom of action of the ornamentist; it serves rather to show the resources placed at his disposal and the consequences resulting from different arrangements. The appearance of form is so deeply modified by interior and exterior ornament, that we might almost say that it only possesses the proportions it *seems to have.* Be that as it may, we hope to have convinced the student of the importance of preserving its distinct and entire value.

SECTION V. *Straight and Curved Lines.*—As these form the *sole element of ornamentation* it will not be deemed superfluous if we try to show in what proportions they enter decorative work. In principle it is not easy to understand how the use of one could be adopted to the entire exclusion of the other; since curves alone would produce a plastic, soft appearance, unsatisfactory to the mind and eye. Hence filleted, moulded entablatures, encirclings, or set borders should have their length of straight lines relieved by some curvilinear detail, yielding variety and softness of aspect, Fig. 95. Short, straight lines of different direction, slanting or perpendicular, would, indeed, do this, but would fail to remove their rigid character (see design in Fig. 95 marked A). If, on the contrary, the decoration consisted of a series of flowing lines, concentric and parallel to one another, frequently met with in vaulted or double faced arches and circular-headed portals, the introduction of straight forms would be of excellent effect, Fig. 96.

The multitudinous concentric or double-faced arches and archivolts of Romanesque and Anglo-Norman architecture would be objectionable, had not the builders relieved the monotony of identical lines by enriched mouldings extensively introduced in the chancels, door-ways, etc. Windows of this kind may be studied in the cathedral of Peterborough, the Chapter House of Bristol and many more. Straight lines are the supporting principle of the general structure; to them are due columns, lintels, imposts, cross-bars, pedestals, etc., and upon these rest the more flexible and graceful curved lines, forming arches, circular headings, medallions, pendants, roses and scrolls of every kind.

Fig. 97 shows two mirrors with an oval border round the glass, capped by finials and scrolls, whilst scallops and termini occupy the lower portion. A, an imitation of the Regence style, consists of curvilinear forms; B, on the other hand, is a pleasing combination of straight and curved lines. It will be readily admitted that construction B is superior to construction A.

This principle might be applied to furniture, bronzes, decorative panels and the like, wherein details, often of high quality, look incongruous, because they are unsupported by a rectilinear element. This want of construction is very apparent in the *rocaille* style of Louis XV., whilst the compositions of Louis XVI., despite common-places in some of their details, are always well balanced and of pleasing effect. A nice combination of straight and curved lines is found in Italian Renaissance, Ghiberti's doors of the Baptistery in Florence being a conspicuous example. In England the "Early decorated" affords many noble specimens, both in churches and buildings, in which proportion and just balance of the two elements are observed. Persia is another instance where great—perhaps too great—a use of straight lines is employed, as settings for ornament in structural work; whilst it forms the basis of all Arabian art, be it in ceilings, wainscotings, windows, doorways or the like. Polygonal and stellate forms, disposed at stated intervals, are sometimes introduced to relieve monotony; and the latter, owing to their numerous points, produce at a distance the appearance of repetition of circles, affording enrichment and great variety, which may be increased when roses, scrolls, inscriptions, etc., are used, their elegant curvatures investing the whole with finish.

From the foregoing remarks it is seen that decoration to be attractive must be possessed of variety; therein lies the secret charm which attaches to a large proportion of classic, mediæval and renaissance art, marked by careful selection of geometric, floral and zoomorphic subjects. The ideal is reached when the human form is introduced, either in painting, architecture or sculptured work. The eye is an exacting organ, requiring strong and subdued contrasts to relieve monotony, *i. e.*, subjects placed in juxtaposition, some of which may be viewed from a distance, whilst others will bear closer inspection.

SECTION VI. *Size and Proportion in Decoration.*—There is another principle of the utmost importance in decorative art which we must now consider at some length. Before doing this, however, it will not be deemed irrelevant if we warn the beginner that decorative scale, as it is sometimes called, must not be confounded with scale of proportion, by means of which a design may be reduced or enlarged almost to any extent, whilst rigorously preserving the relative dimensions of the various members, and which is familiar to every artist; whereas decorative proportion, like everything exclusively pertaining to art, is far more complex in character, and embraces the whole decorative scale, and should be determined by the *size and position of materials at command*, its *general aspect*, as well as with reference to *man's stature.*

Art is created by man and for man; of this we see indications everywhere: in the steps, pews, lecturns and pulpits of churches, where, no matter what the dimensions of the building, be it Westminster Abbey, York Minster or a small country church, their average size is appreciably the same. In like manner the chairs, tables and cabinets of our houses, the books we read, the carriages in which we drive, the umbrellas, fans, etc., we carry, are all proportionate to our use and size. As resulting from the principle, when faithfully carried out, that the components of a drawing or plaque must be proportionate to the unit, it will not be difficult to determine the approximate dimensions of the work presented for inspection. Thus, Fig. 98 shows two arches with an appearance of equal height, but where the relative size of the balustrades indicates a notable difference in the real dimensions of each.

Objects of ordinary use should be made beautiful and useful; for a thing, however lovely, if it is unpleasant to use will be set aside, even for one less beautiful, and thus fail in its purpose. Therefore, the hilt of a sword, the handle of a screen or ewer, should be so formed as to fit the hand which is to use them.

All the objects of larger dimensions in Fig. 99 have been purposely represented smaller; but, notwithstanding this inversion, they maintain their superiority of size, and indicate that they were executed in view of the human hand.

The size of the materials is another way for testing the dimensions of an object. Given two buildings with bricks showing externally, it will be easy to determine the relative proportions of the structures by counting the number of courses. In like manner the number of panels of a door or wall, despite the diversified latitude of the woods employed, will indicate the probable measure of their dimensions.

Another principle, scarcely less important, consists in so ordering a decorative composition that its primary designs may be viewed at the distance required for embracing the whole at a glance, and which we will call normal distance, because it is instinctively adopted by every beholder.[*] So that if to get a good

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[*] Diversity of inner subjects need not be observed in such panels occurring in ceilings, wainscoting, etc., because the forms being contiguous set off one another, notwithstanding the repetition of identical general outline.

[*] Within this mean distance the eye sees the designs one by one, and beyond it they disappear into indistinct masses. Exception is not made of short-sighted or long-sighted people, as such infirmities are corrected by glasses.

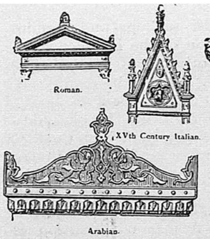


Fig. 91.—Examples of the proper use of Form

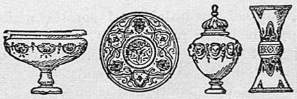


Fig. 119.—Artistic Repetition of Ornament.

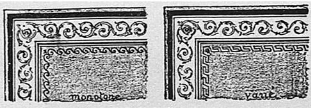


Fig. 120.—Contrast of Monotonous and Varied Decoration.

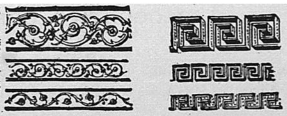


Fig. 111.—Proportion of Ornament to Width.

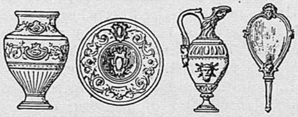


Fig. 118.—Improper Repetition of Ornament.

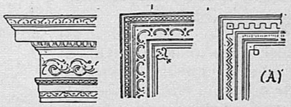
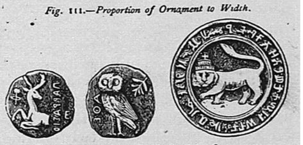


Fig. 95.—Straight Lines combined with Curves, and singly.



Figs. 104, 105, 106.—Simple Symbolic Ornament.

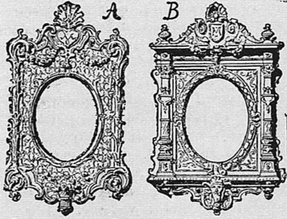


Fig. 97.—Curvilinear Forms pure, and in combination with Straight Lines.

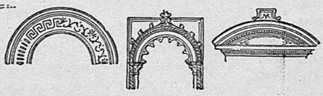


Fig. 96.—Combination of Curves and Straight Lines.

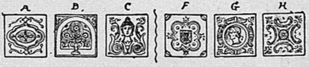


Fig. 93.—Ornament suitably treated in Squares.

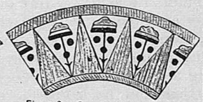
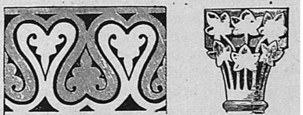


Fig. 128.—Contrasted Decoration.



Figs. 125, 126.—Contrasted Decoration, and Romanesque Capital.

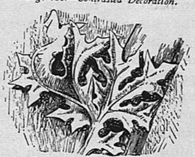


Fig. 127.—Gothic Ornament.

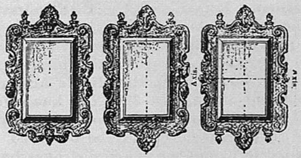


Fig. 117.—Panels of One and of Two Centres.

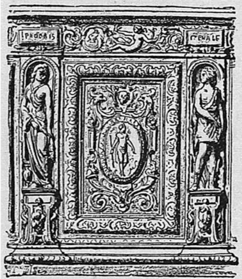


Fig. 102.—Admissible Variety in Proportion.

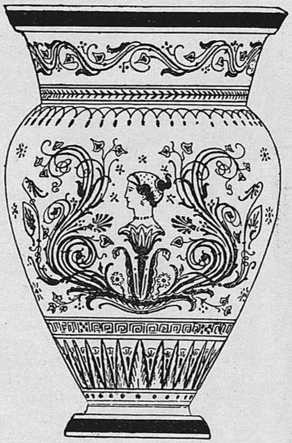


Fig. 112.—Proportion of Ornament to Vase.

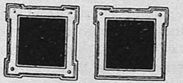


Fig. 94.—Decided and Undecided Squares.

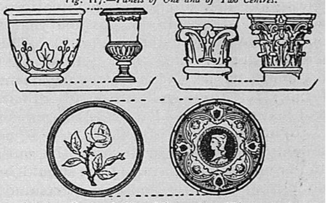


Fig. 100.—Contrasted Effect of Ornament on Objects not referable to Human Scale.

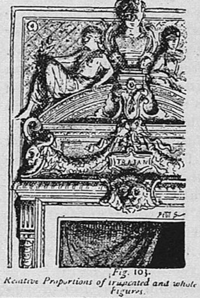


Fig. 103.

Relative Proportions of truncated and whole Figures.

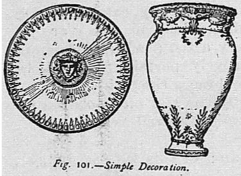


Fig. 101.—Simple Decoration.

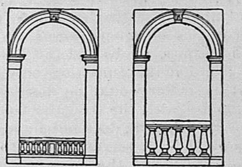


Fig. 98.—Arches of apparent Equality of Scale whose Balustrades indicate relative Dimensions

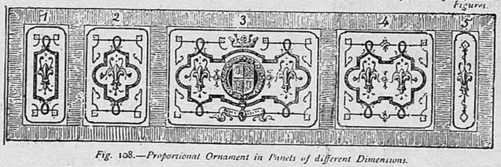


Fig. 108.—Proportional Ornament in Panels of different Dimensions.

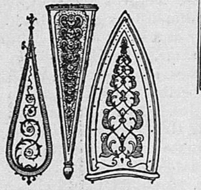


Fig. 113.—Proportion of Ornament to General Outline.

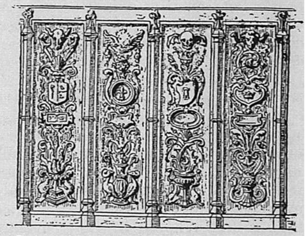


Fig. 110.—Different Forms applied to Panels of same Size.

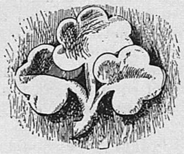


Fig. 124.—Debased Gothic.

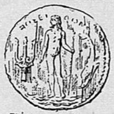


Fig. 107.—Enlarged Subject.

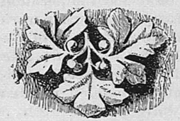


Fig. 123.—Example of good Early Gothic Work.

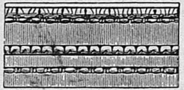


Fig. 115.—Alternation of Fillets of different Character.

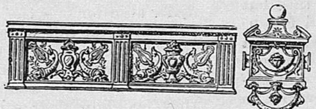


Fig. 116.—Inartistic Decoration: Analogy of Details.

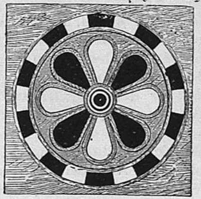


Fig. 129.—Contrasted Decoration.

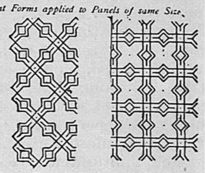


Fig. 92.—Geometrical Ornament.

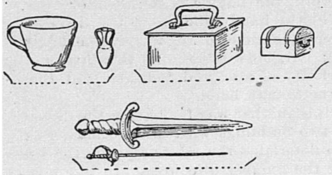


Fig. 99.—Objects whose real Scale is apparent.

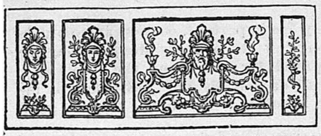


Fig. 109.—Proportional Ornament on Panels of Different Dimensions.

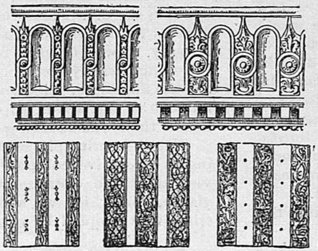


Fig. 114.—Repeated Ornament: Artistic and Inartistic Arrangements.

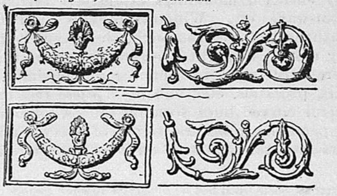


Fig. 121.—Examples of the Effect of good Variation in Outline.

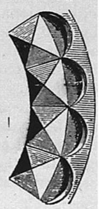


Fig. 130.—Contrasted Decoration.

ILLUSTRATIONS TO DECORATIVE COMPOSITION, BY HENRI MAYEUX.

view we are not perpetually obliged to shift our position backwards and forwards in order to read the details or judge of the general effect, the amplitude of ornament will not be proportioned to the dimensions of the work, but to the normal distance. The object to which ornament is applied must determine its character; thus a necklace, locket, bracelet, or small furniture, meant for close inspection, admits of elaborate enrichment and finish; whilst panels, vases, tables, chairs, etc., which are seen at a certain distance, may be less ornamented and on a larger scale.

The ornamentation of a dessert-plate, for instance, should be on a smaller scale than that of a decorative plate, which is to hang on a wall and be viewed from a certain distance, although both may be of the same dimensions. Respecting plates, Dr. Dresser says: "Little ornament should be placed in the centre; but if there is a central ornament it should be radiating in character. The border should also consist of simple members repeated. for if portions are covered it will not look well. Ornament that has a right and wrong way upwards should be avoided, for it would be inappropriate in such a position." But the scale of ornament should be increased for wall papers, stained glass or architectural decorations, which are destined to be viewed at a greater distance, whilst the proportion of interiors should be less than that of exteriors. In monumental buildings of great altitude, the ornament, whether painted, sculptured, or in bas-relief, must increase from the base to the top, as the details of the upper portions will only be seen from a very great distance; well exemplified in the frieze which stood round the Parthenon at Athens, portions of which are now in the British Museum. As offshoots of this principle, there are some curious points which we will now notice. A certain class of compositions, presenting circling lines, multitudinous divisions, and profusion of details, executed without reference lo the human scale, always imply somewhat larger proportions than those which are more simply treated, Fig. 100. Nevertheless, every large composition need not be complicated, nor details multiplied in the same ratio as the former; on the contrary, this may be very simple and plain in character, provided the ornament is always proportioned to it, Fig. 101. Care should also be exercised to maintain the relative proportions existing in nature, and which are essential in a picture, bas-relief, etc., where human figures, animal and floral forms, and inanimate objects must all be proportioned to one another.

When a composition is uniform, *i. e.*, undivided, as a single panel, the border of a plain surface, etc., unity of arrangement should be the rule; but if the work is divided into distinct parts, such as a frieze, decorated shutters, vases of multiform belts, a triparite panel, medallion, and the like, the proportion may vary for each of them, Fig. 102. Similar variety of arrangement is of constant occurrence in most compositions presenting wide borders, Fig. 41.

The principle of complexity may also exist with objects formed of various materials, such as bronze, ivory and wood, all of which may be of different size; but the ornament of works of one or two colors only should be subdued and far less elaborate than that of multi-colored compositions; truncated subjects also, such as busts, thermæ, lion muzzles, bull and chimæras' heads, masks and the like, either carved or painted, should not be given the same measure as whole figures or flowers of natural growth introduced into the same work, Fig. 103.

In order to secure clearness and harmony for the whole composition, small objects should receive simple treatment, and relative complexity reserved for larger details; in other words, simplicity of ornament should accompany diminutive forms so as to avoid puerile minutiæ or a confused and blurred aspect.

Exceptions are made for a certain class of decorative elements introduced as accessories in a composition; thus the sun, the moon, the stars, prows, masts, as well as guns figuring in military trophies, are generally much reduced as compared to anchors, pullies, harpoons and rigging with which they are associated, and which retain their natural proportions, whilst no difference is made between the size of fortified towers and simple martlets. The reason for this arbitrary difference is two-fold, and doubtless first arose from the impossibility of giving them all a like degree in the same work, and also from their symbolic character, which allows the greatest freedom of treatment, fully exemplified in old Bibles and missals, Figs. 104, 105, 106.

Enlargement may also be resorted to, but for reasons of another kind; thus, as the ornament of minute objects would often entail great difficulties of fabrication, certain details are enlarged to make the subject clear. This is seen in numbers of ancient coins, exhibiting proportionally much larger dimensions than the human form, Fig. 107. But such emblems should always be isolated and and at some distance from the figure, for if they come in contact their dimensions would be incongruous. The ancients carried this license very far in their glyptics, where human heads are kept larger than is legitimate, so as to make the features more distinct. In like manner, but from mere adulatory reasons, the principal characters of decorative compositions have been purposely given larger proportions than those with whom they are associated. This is well exempliged in Assyrian and Egyptian bas-reliefs, bas-reliefs, portions of which are in the British Museum, in which Sennacherib, Ramses, or Seti tower far above the grandees by whom they are surrounded. With the Greeks this is also observable, although in a less degree; thus, in the Laocoon and the Niobe groups, the father and mother respectfully are invested with gigantic statures; in the latter case, Niobe is not only taller than the tallest of her sons, but also taller than the long-bearded and well-proportioned tutor. There is no doubt that this mode has the advantage of securing both clearness of aspect and monumental outline so essential in decorative compositions.

More examples might be adduced, but these will suffice to illustrate the principle, and to show the direction in which the student can open out for himself new fields for observation; whether in Pagan or early Christian work, notably Byzantine, or in sculpture, bas-reliefs, painting, coins, and, in fact, throughout the whole range of art production. We do not mean to imply that similar license should be maintained in its integrity; it was not only justifiable but right in the early stages of art. But as with civilization so with art also; as it progresses and rises higher, the laws governing its production become more stringent and severe, so that the artist should strive more and more to clothe his pictorial conceptions with a truthful and harmonious reflex of the manifestation observed in nature and around him, basing his mode of action upon a superabundance of exemplars both in the past and the present day.

Reduction is sometimes applied to secondary details to gauge the proportion of the subject. The size of a large, single figure, for example, may be indicated by its accessories, which should be minute, clear and well defined. It was in obedience to this principle that Phidias represented the whole conflict between the Centaurs and the Lapithæ round the sole of the sandals of his colossal statue of Pallas-Athene.

It may be interesting to note that no decorative subject can be *reduced* or *enlarged* in notable proportions, without part of its character being destroyed; hence, the minute details of statues and other art-objects, reduced by mechanical means, become effaced and of no effect when enlarged; whilst the reverse takes place when summary details are elongated, resulting in lifeless and common expression.

To make our meaning somewhat clearer, we will suppose that we are going to decorate a large room with a series of panels, no matter whether mosaic, painted, or carved, all of the *same height* but of *different widths*, Fig. 108. The first thing to consider is the nature of the room, and being satisfied that the ornament of the panels, to be in harmony with it, must be uniform in character, we select No. 2 of the series, which from its medium size will best serve as a type and adapt itself almost anywhere. The ornament consists of two half circles and a similar number of nodules, the center being occupied with a fleur-de lis and a ribbon knot.

The next thing is to find out how to place this design in the other panels without destroying the character and harmony of the composition. For example, let us select Panel 1: we at once see that the arrangement we have chosen as a type cannot very well fit the space allotted to it, and that it would appear, moreover, out of place and infringe upon the sides of the background. We may not reduce it, for that would alter its proportions; but if we maintain the characteristic details, such as the ribbon, fleur-de-lis, and nodules, in their integrity, we may supress the circles, and then the design will fit the frame.

We now pass on to No. 4, where the design, being too large for the ground, leaves the sides bare; but as we may not alter its proportion, we are only left the choice of repeating the design, adding a detail for the center.

Next comes No. 3, the largest of all, where the preceding device, although very much developed, is insufficient to fill up the surface; hence a special arrangement which shall unite the two devices and maintain the nature of the subject becomes necessary. To this may be added some interesting details; for example, a label, crown, and ribbon knot.

We have one more panel, No. 5, which, owing to its narrow dimensions, will require greater subtlety of arrangement in order to preserve harmony of proportion, as here the type device cannot possibly fit the space even if reduced to the simple expression of No. 1. To leave it alone would be one way of solving the difficulty, and not a bad way either, small surfaces being often left bare to set off enriched ones; but in this case a similar treatment might argue poverty of invention; we proceed, therefore, by still greater simplification of type device, and succeed in preserving to this Liliputian panel some reflex of the unit.

In principle, abstract subjects should receive very simple treatment, whilst floral, animal, and especially the human form, require greater subtlety of arrangement when introduced in a composition. Thus, if a series of panels of different sizes were to be decorated with wreaths, brackets, masks, leafage, etc., the form could not well be too simple, and by adopting the same method as before would result in Fig. 109. But if analogy both of dimension and relief in the details, analogy of space division and identical disposition of the subjects were presented in a series of panels of equal size, then greater freedom would be allowed in the form of ornament, Fig. 110. Great care must be exercised too, in reducing the human figure, so as not to give it a cramped position; hence, if the space is too small for the whole form, a bust or cameo might be substituted with advantage. In cases, however, where it is necessary to maintain the whole, a youth or a child may be thrown in, whose proportion being the same as would be given to an adult in that position will indicate enlarged scale; whilst a bird may be replaced by a butterfly, or a simple gnat, thus securing proportion and satisfactory aspect for the whole work.

Conformably to the principle of unity of proportion, it is self-evident that the same ornament must not be applied to borders of *different width* forming part of the same composition; nevertheless, without altering the nature of the ornament, some details might be omitted or superadded, resulting in agreeable effect, Fig. 111; in which the upper designs, while suited to the widths represented, would have a bad effect if reduced to suit the widths of the lower designs. For equilateral, triangular, ovoid, or conical forms, gradually fining into a point, the details should be proportionate to the general outline; *i.e.* simplified from the base to the top, Fig. 113. The Greeks and Græco-Romans are our masters in the art of proportioning their ornament to the size of their vases; the neck exhibiting very delicate foliated scrolls, repeated with adjunctions on the body; the chief characteristics of the ornament being maintained throughout, Fig. 112. This important principle is too often neglected in architecture, and conspicuous by its absence in all art industries. Thus, we daily see different mouldings applied on members of the same furniture; and different proportion given to the various pieces of a breakfast or dinner service; whilst a little care could so easily remedy such unpleasing faults. In like manner, the earrings, necklace, brooch, or bracelet of a set must have identical details, which may be enriched with additional designs, but without altering their dimensions.

To sum up, if the student will adhere to the rules laid down in this chapter, he will secure that good aspect and harmony so essential in decorative composition.

VII.—VARIATION AND REPETITION.

If we could take up successively the details of a composition, we should find that the principle advocated in the chapters treating of proportion, profile, and outline, are applicable to details presenting characteristic forms. We will limit ourselves, however, to the consideration of the laws governing them, and notably in what degree repetition or variation is desirable in a given composition.

Ornament repeated at similar distances is set off and emphasized by intervening spaces differing in size from it as much as possible. Sometimes richness of effect is obtained by diversified forms of ornament in juxtaposition; such as Greek and Roman modillions and dentels, of far better aspect than Byzantine forms distributed at long intervals, Fig. 114; sometimes by alternating enriched fillets with plain, Fig. 115. But no matter how complete the scheme of ornament the artist selects he must keep well in view the important fact that primary subjects should be brought out, and their characteristic features emphasized so as to render similarity or analogy of aspect in details of different nature, even at a distance, impossible, Fig. 116.

Panels of one center or vertical line should not have ornament repeated in an upward and transverse direction, but such ornament would be legitimate in panels of two centers, Fig. 117.

Upward and symmetrical ornament can only be applied on a rounded form, when this is likewise symmetrical, *i.e.*, presents a similar surface; whilst identical detail should not be placed in works of different form and modelling, such as the center and border of a plate, the neck and body of a vase, the frame and handle of a mirror, the foot and back of an arm-chair, etc., Fig. 118; but repetition would be right on the parts of the same surface; for example, a plate-border, the neck, body, or foot of vessels, and also on a certain class of symmetrical forms of vertical direction, Fig. 119.

If, however, the composition afforded isolated objects, an ewer and its basin; for example, or detached pieces of the same set, they should be united by repetition of one or more designs; as in this case, similar repetition would in no wise be opposed to the principle we advocate. False analogies have, moreover, this advantage, that they reveal poverty of imagination, and result in monotony. Such would be a decorative panel where classical scrolls and strapwork, differing somewhat in detail, but exhibiting uniformity of aspect; should be repeated throughout, Fig. 120. And here, we may warn the student to guard against the abuse of *volute terminals* on trusses, capitals, and the like, which he will, unfortunately, too often see around him. A volute or spiral is a decorative element at once elegant and easily manufactured, but it fails in its purpose if employed without discrimination.

The grave misapprehension of ill-understood analogies is frequently met with in monumental façades, the cabinets of the Renaissance and those of the Middle Ages affording unequal parts; where caryatides, chimeras, and saints of most identical position are superimposed with utter disregard as to their unfitness and incongruity.

The necessity of variation is even felt throughout the same detail not requiring continuous and uniform size, hence the *outline* of wreaths, scrolls, ribbon-knots, and the like should be as varied as possible, Fig. 121, in which the designs B are heavy and unpleasing, compared with the designs A, albeit their proportion is the same. This principle of variation and repetition is applicable to reliefs; thus in details of different nature, *true* or *colored* relief found in sculpture and painting should follow the inflections of outlines, and by orderly distribution of salient points *colored expression* would be secured, well seen in A, Fig. 121. We feel that this principle was fully kept in view in the art of the Renaissance, exhibiting scrolls, ribbons, wreaths, clustered fruit and foliage; as well as figures, palms, escutcheons, etc., often of exceeding beauty and richness of effect; subdued parts being contrasted by forms standing out in bold relief, Fig. 122.

Repetition is of frequent occurrence in nature; for example, in the ring of petals in the primrose, the anemone, the buttercups, and a host more; and variation may be observed in the transition of form in the leaves of many plants, such as the columbine, the fern, etc.; whilst contrast both of form and color may be witnessed in the unfolding of the horse-chestnut bud, in the scarlet and white camellias with their green glossy leaves, in the yellow stamens of the red japonica, the scarlet berries and green leaves of the holly—and indeed throughout the whole of nature.

Many late Roman and Byzantine bas-reliefs present scrolls, floral, animal and human forms, often of excellent execution, but they fail to interest us, owing to their sameness and want of contrast (see *ante*, Fig. 60). The truth of this principle may be illustrated by the treatment foliage has received at various epochs: thus the leaf of the maple divided in bold masses is exceedingly satisfactory when viewed in English Decorated architecture, where its rendering is marked by truthfulness and tenderness; whilst on the buildings of the debased Gothic style of architecture the gouge or chisel marks too often remind us, if that were necessary, of its labored and unnatural appearance, Figs. 123, 124.

"Contrast," says a great authority, "is as necessary for effect in form, quantity of detail, and the position of lines, as it is in color; this is well exemplified in Fig. 125, wherein contrast is produced not only by reversing the unit, but emphasized by variation of color."

The form of the acanthus, met with throughout the monuments of antiquity, the deeply indented leaves of the parsley, those of the fig and oak trees, etc., are allowed their varied and rich outline and due regard for natural growth, at the hands of mediæval artists; that this is not the case with Byzantine, Romanesque, or English Norman work, the student can see for himself if he will compare Fig. 126, a foliate capital of Romanesque character, with Fig. 127, from a Gothic church.

The naturally flexible outlines of flowers should be carefully maintained, as nothing more obnoxious can well be imagined than when their mode of treatment is stiff, uniform and rigid. Artists and skilful sculptors have at all times felt the value of contrast, and by a just distribution of contrast, and variation, have secured warm and diversified aspect, Fig. 128.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PERSIAN carpets are rarely of large size, being woven by woman and children of the country villages in small apartments. There are three classes of the carpets and two of rugs. The carpets are usually of oblong shape. Turcoman rugs, in texture and manipulation, surpasses in excellence those made in the Shah's dominions. The rug called ghileen, made in Kurdestan, has a pattern on both sides, the colors are firm and brilliant, and the patterns are of extraordinary beauty; they are also light and flexible. One rug peculiar to Persia is rarely seen; it is made at Teheran, is of silk and is used to throw over tombs and for other sacedotal purposes. The use of aniline colors, introduced some years since, and which had the effect of deteriorating the durability of the colors, is forbidden by the government. There is a numerous variety of Persian rugs generally similar in design, yet few are completely identical. The Persian manufacturers have manifestly secrets in dying that would be of value in our own carpet manufacture. Colors in old rugs are known to have lasted a hundred years without change.

A SOMEWHAT novel decoration of a drawing room which has a good effect consists in coloring the wookwork peacock blue, letting blue predominate in the wall hanging which is of conventionalised design, and painting the doors a yellowish green, whilst the ceiling has a light pinkish hue. The ground should be silver leaf.